



**STATEMENT OF PROCEEDINGS
FOR THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
LOS ANGELES COUNTY
COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION
500 WEST TEMPLE STREET, ROOM 739
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012
<http://lachildrenscommission.org>**

Monday, April 4, 2016

10:00 AM

AUDIO FOR THE ENTIRE MEETING. (16-1890)

Attachments: [AUDIO](#)

Present: Commissioner Geneva Berger, Commissioner Carol O. Biondi, Commissioner Maria Brenes, Commissioner Patricia Curry, Commissioner Sydney Kamlager, Commissioner Liz Seipel, Commissioner Janet Teague, Vice Chair Wendy B. Smith and Chair Sunny Kang

Absent: Commissioner Candace Cooper, Commissioner Wendy Garen, Commissioner John Kim and Vice Chair Jacquelyn McCroskey

I. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

1. Call to Order. (16-1499)

The meeting was called to order by Chair Kang at 10:00 a.m.

2. Introduction of meeting attendees. (16-1502)

Self-introductions were made.

3. Approval of the minutes from the March 21, 2016 meeting. (16-1500)

On motion of Commissioner Berger, seconded by Commissioner Teague (Commissioners Cooper, Garen, Kamlager, Kim, and McCroskey being absent), this item was approved.

Attachments: [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT](#)

II. REPORTS

4. Chair's Report. (16-1501)

Chair Kang reported the following:

- **The Office of Child Protection will convene a meeting on Friday, April 15, 2016, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., at the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration; topics for discussion include updates on the current status of the Public Health Nurse (PHN) and Children's Social Worker (CSW) Joint Visitation Pilot Program, an overview of PHNs from the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Department of Public Health, and discussion of other potential uses of PHNs such as administration of psychotropic medication, working with the Homeless or CSEC youth. Those interested in attending can obtain further details from Tamara Hunter, MSW, Executive Director.**
- **Commissioners Curry and Teague volunteered to attend the Office of Child Protection meeting of April 15, 2016.**
- **DCFS extended an invitation to the Commission to attend its' Core Practice Model Implementation LOG on April 28, 2016 from 8AM - 4:00 PM, in Montebello. Please contact Ms. Hunter to RSVP.**

5. Department of Children and Family Services Director's Report by Philip L. Browning, Director. (16-1503)

Director Philip L. Browning, Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) reported the following:

- **Referenced the Lexi-case in which a Native American child was removed from a non-Native American foster care home and placed with family members of the child's tribe; the primary goal of DCFS is to place children with their relatives. Due to extensive media coverage and confidentiality issues involved, a petition was approved by Judge Levanas to allow DCFS to provide information regarding the appropriate action taken to place this child with relatives, as mandated by the Indian Child Welfare Act. DCFS is confident that this is one of the best documented cases; all parties involved took appropriate action. The foster parents were made aware from the beginning that the child had family and would be placed with them should reunification fail. The family in Utah visited the child every month for three years while she was placed with the foster parents;**

- **An article by Garrett Theorolf stated that children spent longer stays in foster care, with a dramatic increase of petitions filed; however, the fact is that detained-petitions have decreased. The reporter may have counted all petitions, including non-detained petitions and Assembly Bill 12 petitions. When totaled, this would show an increase of 100%. Articles should be read carefully;**
- **The Chronicle for Social Change featured an article on a recently published 150 page report prepared by the Commission to Eliminate Child Abuse and Neglect, Chaired by David Sanders, and noted two Commissioners' refused to sign the report. This nationally created commission was unable to come up with solutions, many common issues that DCFS encounters daily. The summary contained in the article could be of interest; highlights include a differential response, the mechanism described as keeping children out of child welfare agencies has not proven successful; and**
- **Will testify at hearing in Sacramento on Wednesday, April 6, 2016 regarding child care bridge funding.**

III. PRESENTATIONS

6. Department of Children and Family Services/Updates on Departmental Efforts in the Area of Placement Resources

- Ayanna McLeod, Resource Family Recruitment Project Manager
- Nina Powell, Division Chief, ASFA/Kinship and Parents In Partnership Division
- Joseph Prusak, Acting Assistant Division Chief, Adoptions and Permanency Resources Division
- Kym Renner, Deputy Director, Administrative Support Bureau
- Karen Richardson, Division Chief, Out-of-Home Care Management Division (16-1504)

Joseph Prusak, Acting Assistant Division Chief, Adoptions and Permanency Resources Division, DCFS, presented the following:

- **Kin relatives and extended family members are the largest placement resources;**
- **The Division title is misleading, but it includes responsibilities of recruiting and approving foster parents and the decrease in foster homes is an area that they've been working on; and**

- As of February 2016, DCFS approved 720 licensed foster homes (approximately 1,997 beds). This is a steady increase since 2013 with approximately 180 homes and 330 beds a year. This increase was made possible due to an increase of staff in the section of DCFS that approves home studies. There are now four units, including 24 County Social Workers approving families interested in fostering or adopting.

Karen Richardson, Division Chief, Out of Home Care Management Division, DCFS, presented the following:

- DCFS currently contracts with 47 FFAs in the County and as of February 2016, 3,186 foster homes (approximately 7,077 beds) have been certified. Typically 5,000 children are placed in FFAs each month and has remained consistent in the last few years;
- DCFS is facing challenges of finding families willing to accept children during the matching process. DCFS is working with providers to address barriers, including child care and hope to have some resolution in the future and encourage them to recruit families for children with special health care needs, CSEC youth and children with serious mental health and behavioral needs;
- Since FFA rates have not increased in the last 15 years, FFAs are not able to afford more extensive recruitment and are having challenges with their recruitment strategies. They are hoping that with CCR, new FFA rates will allow for more recruitment efforts; and
- DCFS reopened the solicitation for FFA on September 29, 2015 and executed one (1) contract in February 2016 with the goal of increasing FFA placement capacity.

Mr. Prusak further presented the following:

- Becoming a foster parent is currently a joint process with DCFS and Community Care Licensing (CCL);
- There are eight (8) orientations throughout the County each month with joint information sessions. Families interested in fostering would need to attend one (1) of 59 Permanence and Safety-Model Approach to Partnerships in Parenting (PS MAPP) series containing 33 hours of curriculum provided by The Community College Foundation. It is a lengthy commitment to complete the pre-approval training. CCL will no longer be involved with granting foster parent licenses once RFA is implemented in January 1, 2017;

- The process of becoming a foster parent will be simpler under RFA, there will only be one process to complete with one set of paperwork, a home inspection, and live scan;
- RFA implementation plan includes shortening the pre training curriculum to 20 hours. DCFS is working on having the orientation and training online to give families more flexibility to complete the process;
- Traditional types of recruitment activities will continue. DCFS staff attends approximately 50 community events each year to provide information on becoming a foster parent. Types of recruitment efforts include community events with large turnouts, faith based with presentations at churches, social media, radio, and ads in community newspapers. Community expos have been held in Compton, Van Nuys, San Gabriel Valley, Pasadena, Palmdale, and South Bay. DCFS works closely with FFAs serving those areas and look for stakeholders who are in the community, a person of influence, elected officials and local law enforcement. The expo is a joint and promising recruitment opportunity that DCFS has been pursuing and invites families interested in foster care to attend for additional information; and
- Although the number of foster homes is increasing, there is still a need for additional placement resources. With CCR, there will be more youth needing to be successfully supported in family settings due to the reduced use of congregate care. DCFS will need to reposition recruitment in ways to be as vital and focused on increasing capacity for CCR as soon as possible.

Ayanna McLeod, Resource Family Recruitment Project Manager, DCFS, presented the following:

- Resource Family (RF) is replacing the term of foster parent. It is short term care for related and unrelated children in the DCFS system and the need to increase RF is vital;
- The goal is to increase the number of qualified RF, retain current RF, and increase amount of support provided to RF;

- Targeted recruitment activities include partnership with “Angels in Waiting” to recruit nurses as resource parents for medically fragile children and recruitment in African American, Latino, and faith based communities. DCFS will continue child specific recruitment, participation in “Wednesday’s Child”, “Heart Gallery” and distribution of the monthly “child in waiting” list;
- In 2015, DCFS submitted a proposal for the Foster Parent and Relative Caregiver Recruitment, Retention and Support (FRRS) plan to the State. In January 2016, DCFS was awarded \$6.6 million to support, retain, and recruit RF. In March 2016, DCFS received an additional \$1.2 million, for a total of 8.8 million;
- A total of nine (9) out of 16 initiative activities were approved:
 1. Emergency placement stipend: a one-time \$400 stipend that will bridge funding for relative caregivers during the approval process and bridge their ability to receive ongoing funding;
 2. Tangible Support Program: items that DCFS will purchase to care for small children such as strollers, cribs, diapers, etc.;
 3. Recruitment Fairs and Expos: especially in Katie A. immersion offices;
 4. Respite Care Program: looking to increase the current respite care policy to approximately \$10 an hour, totaling 72 hours and the opportunity to partner with other departments in their contracting with respite care providers;
 5. Faith Based Community Supports: expand DCFS’ supportive services to kinship families. Looking at potential recruitment pilot with faith based community partners;
 6. Foster Parent Liaison: dedicated staff that will provide technical assistance and support to prospective and approved RF;
 7. Caregiver Support Groups: support groups that will assist relatives, provide linkage to community based supportive services, such as education, health, mental health, and public assistance;

- 8. Specialized Placement and Replacement Staff:** dedicated placement staff responsible for finding families and caregiver engagement; and
 - 9. Caregiver Training Academy:** to expand caregiver knowledge, competency and skills to better manage children's behavioral, mental health, and other trauma needs.
- **Additional funding for child care is needed to add as a resource to working families.**
 - **DCFS is also working towards implementing the Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI). It is an approach to strengthen foster care by refocusing efforts on developing excellent parenting skills for RF based on provision of training and support;**
 - **DCFS has been exploring upfront family finding and extreme recruitment through conversations with other counties. Upfront family finding proposes dedicated clerks to initiate family finding on all open cases. The goal is to establish significant and supportive connections which will potentially lead to permanency and additional to RF capacity.**
 - **Extreme recruitment is a tool that other counties and child welfare agencies are utilizing to find permanency for children in less time than usual. It targets hard to place children (ages 10-18), sibling groups and minority children and looks at the use of private investigators, family finding, weekly meetings and exhausting all recruitment and investigative strategies. DCFS is conducting additional research on this tool to determine if it will be beneficial to the department;**
 - **DCFS is considering the use of media/marketing consulting to give the department the ability to create and implement a marketing strategy that can be beneficial for its recruitment and retention. DCFS will also look at reshaping its current community message to create a detailed marketing strategy for recruitment.**
 - **DCFS has had conversations with Casey regarding community based placements to recruit homes in a certain area and place children in those homes.**

- DCFS is also exploring the possibility of holding recruitment round tables that will invite community leaders and experts to speak about foster care and services.

In response to questions posed by the Commission, Ms. McLeod and Nina Powell, Division Chief, ASFA/Kinship and Parents in Partnership Division, DCFS, responded with the following:

- Funds will be allocated based on activities and not on supervisorial districts. DCFS is awaiting confirmation on whether or not funds will be rolled over to the 2016 17 budget;
- Each of the nine (9) areas of activities will be funded as needed by the awarded \$8 million;
- An analysis will be needed to determine the difference between the resources we have and resources needed. Some children will transition into short term therapeutic program and some will transition to home based family care; all depends on the child's needs; and
- With the efforts of intensive family finding, some of the gaps may be filled by the extended family connection. They may be able to locate long lost relatives or non-related extended family members and build in a support to transition the child to an extended family relationship.

In response to questions posed by the Commission regarding how the department will meet the need for placement beds and comply with the requirements of CCR, Mr. Browning and Ms. Richardson responded with the following:

- It's not about how many beds are needed, but the type of beds needed. It is going to take time and training and every county is working towards the new RFA expectations and requirements;
- The State has already identified and extended a period of time when this program is going to occur;
- We may lose some relatives if they do not meet the new requirements and expectations; and
- The idea of CCR was to have services brought to the child and there is still confusion at the State level as to what mental health services are available to children in home based care.

Mr. Browning reported that DCFS did some targeted recruitment and partnered with a local group to create 23 licensed Korean speaking foster homes which can now place children that could not be placed before. The combined effort will broaden foster homes to other Asian languages.

In response to questions posed by the Commission regarding ages 0-2 placement, Ms. Powell and Mr. Prusak responded with the following:

- There are tangible goods available and DCFS is trying to get the word out. They are constantly trying to meet the demand and needs of caregivers;**
- Some existing caregivers will be more receptive to taking infants if there is emergency childcare in place and resources that would support them;**
- DCFS is working to put things in place that would support caregivers who are willing to take infants that need placement. DCFS is targeting this area to make it possible for families to quickly take on a young child; and**
- DCFS is working with expert consultants to refine their messages in regards to marketing and how to identify the best homes for these children.**

In response to questions posed by the Commission regarding the expo returns and support plans, Mr. Prusak and Ms. McLeod responded with the following:

- DCFS receives approximately 20 interested families from each recruitment expo;**
- The department will continue to analyze the ultimate outcome of approved homes;**
- Looking to enhance data collection utilizing the Effort to Outcome program; it will look at the time and funds spent on recruitment events and the ultimate outcome;**

- **Approximately 5% of families attending expos will make contact with DCFS and 5% will proceed through the approval process;**
- **Majority of the approved nine (9) initiative activities are supports; and**
- **The strategic plan includes the placement resources SPOT team.**

In response to questions posed by the Commission regarding the faith based counsel in every office and recruitment in areas with high density problems, Ms. Richardson, Ms. Powell and Ms. McLeod responded the following:

- **There are faith based counsels in some of the offices. DCFS will have to report back and confirm if they are located in every office. This is an excellent opportunity to leverage resources with recruitment funding;**
- **While drafting the strategic plan, DCFS was thinking of how to leverage existing relationships with groups that are already in existence and doing analysis to leverage this opportunity;**
- **DCFS received a landscape analysis from the Southern California Grantmakers that looked at their faith based partners and at the way they can collaborate; and**
- **DCFS is working with the Casey Foundation in developing a comprehensive plan to address recruitment in areas with high density problems.**

In response to questions posed by the Commission regarding how the department follows up with potential foster caregivers, visitation issues and media campaign, Ms. Richardson, Mr. Prusak and Ms. McLeod responded with the following:

- **The Judicial offices discussed how DCFS should be developing a family visitation plan from day one and presenting it to the Court so that the Court can make plans that are best for the children and families; plans in the Child and Family Team meetings would help everyone involved;**
- **Supporting visitation for both caregiver and birth parents was one of the strategies submitted to the State that did not get approved; and**

- **Ms. McLeod is the main point of contact regarding the media campaigns.**

Attachments: [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT](#)

7. Department of Children and Family Services/Youth Development Services Division

- Wendy Luke, Division Chief, Youth Development Services (16-1505)

Wendy Luke, Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), provided an overview of the Youth Development Services Division (YDS) and reported the following:

- **Part of the strategic plan and vision of YDS is to provide the necessary training and skills to promote self-sufficiency to Transitional Age Youth (TAY) and young adults, work in collaboration with community providers and other Los Angeles County departments, and to remove silos of information and provide information in a uniform manner;**
- **YDS is currently working with employers to provide and improve the skills necessary for youth to obtain, maintain and advance in employment opportunities;**
- **Housing and life skills such as cooking, driver education and navigating public transportation for the TAY population is also provided; and**
- **Both DCFS and Probation are currently working in collaboration on a plan to address The Homeless Initiative recommendations and will provide a report back soon.**

Frank Trejo, Probation Department (PD), indicated that they currently contract with six agencies that have the ability to provide additional Transitional Housing Placement-Plus (THP-Plus) beds; Ettie Lee, Florence Crittenton, Hathaway-Sycamores, First Place, United Friends and St. Anne's (Housing for Females only).

In response to questions posed by the Commission, Mr. Trejo responded with the following:

- **There are approximately 180 Assembly Bill 12 (AB 12) candidates and several who have children (their children may also receive financial support via stipends);**

- **AB 12 individuals fall under the transition jurisdiction of the California Welfare and Institution Code 450 (WIC 450); however, they are monitored by the PD and must remain in compliance with the requirements of the program to receive a monthly stipend of approximately \$845;**
- **A PD brochure containing over 60 housing agencies was distributed to the Commissioners; and**
- **Probation is working on various strategies to address the Homeless Initiative and enhance services for TAY.**

Diana Iglesias, DCFS, added that there are approximately 2,700 AB 12 individuals in the child welfare system and a court room dedicated to AB 12 cases will be opening soon.

In response to questions posed by the Commission, the following was reported:

David Wong, Probation Department, indicated that the development of a database to track Independent Living Program (ILP) individuals is currently in progress. Requirements for individuals to qualify for ILP and AB 12 differ and may receive similar services.

Ms. Luke added that there are currently 82 THP-Plus beds and additional may be requested; however, a budgetary allowance may be required, further information on THP-Plus beds, housing, mental health, financial, literacy, education and life skills will be provided at a future presentation; and data regarding AB 12, ILP and Probation Camp individuals will be provided soon.

Philip L. Browning, Director, DCFS, further added that there are approximately 1,000 individuals who live in Supervised Independent Living Programs (SILP's) and there has not been an issue with finding a Group Home, Foster Home or SILP; however, challenges in locating housing arise when the youth have mental health, substance abuse or behavioral issues. Mr. Browning added that the California Department of Finance announced that funding for Assembly Bill 12 (AB 12) has been exceeded and Los Angeles County does not have to continue serving individuals who fall under that category once funding has been exhausted; County funding for AB 12 will be exceeded soon. More details will become available soon.

Commissioner Curry commended Ms. Luke for the great work she has done and for the redesign of YDS. Ms. Curry also shared the ILP budget report prepared by Ms. Luke with the Commissioners. Commissioner Biondi shared a story of a 17 year old made ILP eligible by the Court.

Commissioner Kamlager questioned the number of available transitional housing beds after a roundtable she attended in which youth expressed concerns with the availability of resources. She suggested contacting the state as a strategy; she also requested an update from Ms. Luke at a future meeting.

Member of the public, Susan Abrams of the Children's Law Center, indicated that AB 12 is federally funded and services to individuals are still available.

IV. MISCELLANEOUS

- 8.** Matters not posted on the agenda, to be discussed and (if requested) placed on the agenda for action at a future meeting of the Commission, or matters requiring immediate action because of an emergency situation or where the need to take action arose subsequent to the posting of the agenda. (16-1506)

There were no matters presented.

- 9.** Opportunity for members of the public to address the Commission on item(s) of interest that are within the jurisdiction of the Commission. (16-1507)

No members of the public addressed the Commission on this item.

Adjournment. (16-1508)

- 10. The meeting adjourned at 11:57 a.m.**